

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HEW-06 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

IO-10 MED-03 SCA-01 OES-04 PA-02 PRS-01 INR-07 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 AID-05 PC-05 SCSE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 RSC-01 H-02

ARAE-00 /078 W

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O P 051425Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6279

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY

UNCLAS BRASILIA 8353

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, BR

SUBJECT: MENINGITIS OUTBREAK - BRAZIL

1. FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR FROM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER IN RIO IS REPEATED FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION: BEGIN QUOTE FYI - PROBABLY BECAUSE OF ARTICLES THAT APPEARED IN OCTOBER 31 BRAZIL HERALD AND JORNAL DO BRASIL, WE ARE RECEIVING INCREASING NUMBER OF CALLS FROM IRATE AND EMOTIONAL AMERICANS REGARDING THEIR NOT BEING INCLUDED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE INOCULATION PROGRAM. MOST CLAIM THAT AS AMERICANS REGISTERED WITH THE CONSULATE GENERAL THEY ARE "ENTITLED" TO THE PROTECTION OF THE U.S.G. IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS SUCH AS THE MENINGITIS EPIDEMICS IN BRAZIL." SEVERAL CALLERS CLAIM THAT THEY WILL SEND TELEGRAMS OF COMPLAINT TO THEIR CONGRESSMEN. IN ANTICIPATION OF ANY CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE EMBASSY, I WANT TO KEEP YOU INFORMED. END QUOTE.

2. STATE 163040 OF JULY 27 REQUESTED AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MENINGITIS SITUATION AS OF THAT TIME AND SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED INFORMATION EVALUATING THE DANGER TO THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND ADVISABILITY OF TRAVEL BY AMERICANS TO THE AFFECTED AREAS. IN UNCLASSIFIED

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RESPONSE, BRASILIA 4779 GAVE A COUNTRY-WIDE ROUNDUP

AND DREW CONCLUSIONS OF THE SITUATION THEN EXISTING. PARA 9 STATED IN PERTINENT PART THE OPINION OF THE REGIONAL MEDICAL OFFICER THAT AMERICANS, TAKING NORMAL HEALTH PRECAUTIONS AND EXERCISING CARE REGARDING HYGIENE, FOOD SANITATION, AVOIDING CROWDED CONDITIONS, ETC., DO NOT REPEAT NOT RUN UNDUE RISK OF INFECTION.

3. ON JULY 29, THE EMBASSY RESPONDED TO A REQUEST FROM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO THAT THE EMBASSY GIVE SERIOUS RECONSIDERATION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING VACCINE AVAILABLE TO RESIDENT NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS EITHER IN COOPERATION WITH OR PARALLELED TO THE INOCULATION PROGRAM PLANNED BY BRAZILIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES. PARA 8 OF BRASILIA 5625 ADVISED SAO PAULO OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE ACT WHICH GOVERNED THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FOREIGN SERVICE MEDICAL PROGRAM IS APPLICABLE, ADVISED OF THE THEN-EXTREMELY LIMITED SUPPLY OF AVAILABLE VACCINE, AND POINTED OUT THAT TO INSIST THAT BRAZILIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES DIVERT A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF SUPPLIES OR TRY TO PERSUADE BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES TO GIVE SOME SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OR PRIORITY TO THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ENTAILED THE MOST SERIOUS ADVERSE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES, I.E., THAT SUCH ACTION COULD BE CONSTRUED AS SUBSTITUTING THE JUDGEMENT OF AN ENTITY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR THAT OF DULY-CONSTITUTED BRAZILIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES, AND COULD LEAD POSSIBLY TO THE INOCULATION OF PERSONS WHOSE EXPOSURE TO MENINGITIS WAS LESS LIKELY THAT THAT OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TOTAL POPULATIONS. TAKEN TOGETHER, THESE COURSES CONCEIVABLY COULD HAVE BEEN VIEWED AS AN INVASION OF THE RESPONSABILITY OF BRAZILIAN MEDICAL AUTHORITIES.

4. SINCE THAT TIME, WE HAVE ANSWERED CORRESPONDENCE, INQUIRIES, AND SOME PRESS INQUIRIES WITH THE CONSISTENT LINE THAT AMERICANS WHO MAINTAIN NORMAL STANDARDS OF HEALTH AND SANITATION ACCEPT A MINIMUM RISK OF EXPOSURE TO MENINGITIS AND THAT BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES WERE ENDEAVORING IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY TO OBTAIN ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF VACCINE FOR MASS INOCULATION PROGRAMS. IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES REGARDING TRAVEL TO BRAZIL, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY MIRRORED THE FACT THE BRAZILIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO RESTRICT TRAVEL TO OR WITHIN BRAZIL. THE NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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DEVELOPMENT, OF WHICH THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, IS THAT BRAZIL REPORTEDLY HAS DECIDED NOT TO HOST THE PAN AMERICAN GAMES BECAUSE OF THE EPIDEMIC.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: CONFRONTED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRIES ON THIS SUBJECT, THE EMBASSY REQUESTS THE DEPARTMENT (1) AFFIRM THE POSITION DETAILED ABOVE AND (2) CONFIRM THAT IT PLANS TO RESPOND TO SUCH INQUIRIES WITH

THE POINTS CONTAINED IN BRASILIA 5625.
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